

The Eurasian Bibliographic Bear: A Silly, Misleading, Absurdist¹ Artifice

by Richard Hacken,
who claims to have published it in the monthly
*Zeitschrift für unbeweisbare Vermutungen*²
vol. 42, no. 13, but without the subtitle.³

Humans seem to have developed great respect for most species of *Ursus Linnaeus*, the bear genus named after a Swedish genius⁴—who chose Latin for his binomial nomenclature branding spree. We start to doubt Linnaeus' naming genius a bit, though, when we learn that he named the brown bear *Ursus arctos*, thus ignoring polar bears, who plainly and perma-frostily form the emblematic bearish dude-and-dudette duo in the Arctic. The extant sobriquet *Ursus maritimus* is a partially acceptable alternative handle for the polar bear, but the description is incomplete, as it fails to hint at the pack ice and the snow and the succulently fat seals that are part and Arctic parcel of the polar bears' realm and diet.

Homo sapiens' respect for bears has led to the naming of GPS locations and honorifics such as "Valle dell'ordo" in Italy, "Bern" in Switzerland, "Oursel-Maison" in France, "Rio Osorio" in Venezuela, "Ursinhos de pelúcia" in many Brazilian children's nurseries, "Bears Ears National Monument" in Utah, "Yogi Bear and Boo Boo Bear" in Jellystone Park, "Ursa Major" in the northern skies, and a woman in Rochester named "Ursula."

A finite but not yet final number of humans—sadly, haply, and badly—have brutishly borne a bare bummer of a bias in their bearing toward bears, not bearing the respect that those

¹ Some literary critics have con-winning evidence that the author was actually a great-grand-niece of Ionesco, who referenced a Transylvanian rhinoceros rather than a Eurasian bear.

² *Zhurnal bezdokazuemykh predpolozhenii*, earlier known as *Журнал недоказуемых предположений*.

³ Which the editors insisted on adding for their own liability and sense of duty.

⁴ Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1788) was later known as Carl von Linné after his ennoblement at the hands of an ennobling mob. The mob despised him because he was a "taxonomy collector" but knew there would someday be a "Nobel" prize named after another Swede (whose career would be literally dynamite). Thus, the crowd decided to go noble rather than take a chance on blowing it. Getting back to Linnaeus, though, he died in the Linnaeus Museum in Uppsala before it was even a museum. In fact, his death was a necessary first step towards the house's ennoblement to the status of museum (which was again enacted by an ennobling mob). Preliminary indications almost two and a half centuries after the fact—uncovered from under shards of glass for the first time by this researcher—are that Linnaeus' death was caused when he fell under a falling chandelier that he was trying to install... and his final word was "*Uppsala!*" This may have been the impetus for Goethe's last words, 44 years later: "*Mehr Licht!*" ("More light!").

bears deserve. Such humans have become (de)served themselves, usually piecemeal, into ursine scat (which could be given a more profane term, but you won't find it here).

However, this article is not designed to discuss any other bear than the Eurasian Bibliographic Bear ("EBB" or *Ursus bibliographicus ubiquitous eurasiaticorum*)⁵—whose pronouns are “they,” “them,” “their,” and “there-there”). This species is extremely shy—so shy and reclusive, as a matter of fact, that not a single photo of them has ever been taken, found or (up until now) suggested. The only way the author of this article "knows" of their existence⁶ is from a map of the continental Eurasian landmass provided by a book vendor for the region... and from the “logical” if dreary series of queries and theories that naturally followed in his mind.

From the map (below) you can plainly see the Bibliographic Bear. Their nose faces south and west—sniffing at Serbia—while their hind end is mooning Matsuyama. With attentive ears poised over the Baltic for Nordic cataloging rules, the EBB's front left claw is pawing at the Bosphorus. Their thick body extends so far east that their broad tail dips into the Sea of Japan. Their back left paw is soaking in the Gulf of Tonkin while their back right paw kicks the Aleutian Islands out of the way. This is truly a mega-monumentally massive bear.



⁵ Since Linnaeus is no longer around to censure the author, the latter has contorted the former's binominal nomenclature into quadriminals in this case.

⁶ It was the great Franco-Italian philosopher, Sagesse della Sapienza, who offered in her groundbreaking-but-never-really-ground-repairing work, *J'ai connu Phila quando fosse Sofista*, the following truism: "Too often, epistemology is reduced to only one of its six syllables."

The less trustful among you will have probably assumed by now that this unbearably gigantic bear-beast is but a thinly cloaked mythical, Cold-War-fever-conceived allusion⁷ to some stereotypically symbolic "Russian Bear" (*Ursus phobia sovieticorum*). To such an incongruous conjecture, the author retorts with two tortes and rejoins the rejoinder (as one is wont to do with rejoinders) that they (the EBB) is/are a "*bibliographic*" bear, not a scare-tactic bear.⁸ But the author diverts and digresses... and shall probably continue to do so well into the next paragraph.

How is this alleged bear so "bibliographic," you may ask? What makes this imagined ursine marvel so marvelously adept at information-mongering? A mere glance at the geographical expanse of land covered over by the Eurasian Bibliographic Bear provides the answer, breezily and easily. It covers, of course, the region of Planet Earth most thickly populated by bears, to wit and mainly, plainly, and namely: (a) the Russian Polar Bear (and we know how librarians can't bear to take "polls," so they call them "surveys"); (b) the large "Ussuri Bear," whose ancestors were mythical, spiritual and tribally worshipped (representing books of scripture, which as we all know, are the most widely owned—but never most widely read—of titles); (c) the monstrous and weighty "Kamchatka Bears" (who, like reference librarians, came to "chat" because heavy bytes of info and data await); and, most convincingly of all, (d) the Eurasian Brown Bears from the forests of Siberia. The latter bears, as zoologists (and perhaps phrenologists) have deigned to ascertain, carry inside their furry heads the largest brains out of all (and inside all) terrestrial carnivores. Therefore, until animal activists stepped in to stop the fun,⁹ these highly trainable brown mammals were seen strolling through the streets of Russian towns and cities, playing musical instruments, dancing with babushka scarves on their brainy crania, or smoking pipes along with their human mentors. Can you imagine that a Siberian bear that smokes a pipe and rides a sophisticated 15-gear mountain bike has not read *Doctor Zhivago*? The author asserts that the more politically independent bears, those that frequent a colony in the

⁷ ~~Not Aleutian.~~

⁸ Though it must be admitted that any cousin of a grizzly can be scary, particularly within the prescribed six kilometers of physical distancing and without a military-grade mask that extends 360 horizontal degrees from vertical head to toe. Incidentally, the Eurasian Bibliographic Bear (EBB) is very-exceedingly-very distantly related to the Finnish Literary Owl (FLO). When the EBB is around, the FLO is not, since the FLO is not the EBB.

⁹ "Fun" is a relative term and refers in no way to the embarrassment of a brown bear dressed in a sarafan.

hills to the northeast of Lake Baikal, have even organized a reading club that discusses the works of Solzhenitsyn.¹⁰

Despite the grandiose contributions that this article¹¹ makes to library science, ursine taxonomy, cartographic supposition, and indeed circus theory itself, there are one or two details that further research may yet tease forth before they elucidate the very Meaning of Life on Earth.¹²

The unauthorized author thanks you for your attention.¹³

¹⁰ The club meets on alternate Tuesdays, except during the omul run, which begs the question: "How do the omul survive in the fresh water of Lake Baikal?" One of the answers is: "They don't... if the entire reading club lines both banks of a shallow tributary."

¹¹ The author doesn't understand exactly why his editors insist on calling it an "artifice" rather than an "article."

¹² The meaning of life, as plainly stated by a now-*über*-retired author named Douglas Adams, is "42." But that meaning requires further elucidation. We stand on the shoulders of others, and not only for installing chandeliers.

¹³ Nanner-nanner-nanner numerology requisitions the annexation of a thirteenth (13th) footnote.